

**APPENDIX D**

**NEPA/404 MERGER MEETING MINUTES  
MARCH 22, 2001**

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# Illinois Department of Transportation

Division of Highways / District 8  
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## **ILLINOIS ROUTE 3 RELOCATION NEPA / 404 MERGER PROCESS P-98-082-90**

**March 22, 2001**

A meeting was held March 22, 2001 at the Illinois Department of Transportation District 8 office in Collinsville, Illinois, to discuss the Illinois Route 3 Relocation NEPA / 404 Merger process and concurrence on the Preferred Alternative. The attendance roster is attached. Parsons Brinkerhoff was represented by Mr. Ron Shimizu, Mr. Mark Henderson, Mr. Joseph Marking and Mr. Doug Smith. Mr. Shimizu led the presentation, with Mr. Smith contributing in his area of expertise. A handout of Mr. Shimizu's presentation was distributed.

Mr. Shimizu began by stating his agenda of items he would be covering in his presentation. He stated that he would discuss the NEPA/404 Merger process, the project overview, the need for the project, the alternatives considered, the preferred alternative, the environmental impacts associated with the project, the DEIS public hearings, and the next steps in the project's future.

The merger process has three concurrence points for regulatory agencies to provide comment prior to incorporation into the environmental document. The concurrence points are: "Purpose and Need," "Alternatives", and "Preferred Alternative." The Purpose and Need concurrence meeting was held on June 25, 1996. The Alternatives concurrence meeting was held on September 30, 1997, and the Preferred Alternative concurrence meeting is being held today, March 22, 2001.

The project overview entails the replacing of the existing two-lane segment of IL Route 3 between Sauget and Venice with a four-lane highway that will provide a continuous north-south route between Waterloo and Alton. The proposed route will improve access to existing and planned development, as well as four Mississippi River bridges. It will also improve traffic safety and reduce delays caused by railroad crossings.

Relocated Route 3 has several stop-sign controlled intersections and at-grade crossings which illustrates the roadway deficiencies and subsequent need for the project. The proposed project will replace the stop-signs with traffic signals and provide grade separations and railroad relocations. In terms of roadway capacity, existing Route 3 will become overburdened in the near future with traffic. A four-lane Relocated Route 3 will more evenly distribute the traffic and diminish congestion. The removal of the Route 3 marking will lessen the volume of traffic along I-55/70/64. The connection with the proposed new Mississippi River Bridge results in a reduction of 71,000 vehicles. In terms of traffic safety, the existing roadway is designed to current standards promoting a lower-than-average control facility that will reduce turning movement conflicts which will

lessen accident potential. In terms of improved access and economic development, the proposed route will provide continuity of the marked route and access to four Mississippi River Bridges. Local communities will benefit from better access to the riverfront. In terms of modal interrelationships, the route will enhance access to the MetroLink station sites and potential new bus service.

To facilitate the alternatives to be considered, a Major Investment Study (MIS) and an Interim Congestion Management System (ICMS) were conducted. The MIS concluded that a highway alternative was intermodal friendly and was the only feasible mode of transportation. Light rail transit, bus services, park-and-ride lots, and bicycle facilities will be complementary modes to the highway build alternative. The ICMS concluded that transit, ridesharing, park-and-ride, bicycle and pedestrian facilities, and traffic flow improvements complement the project and will be carried forward.

The alternatives considered are following. A No-Action Alternative was investigated and if implemented, there would be no change to the existing Route 3. The existing roadway deficiencies would remain, and this two-lane section of Route 3 would be inadequate to handle forecast traffic. Economic development would be impeded because of unimproved access. The Highway Build Alternative included five alignments that were analyzed. Each was a four-lane urban arterial highway providing connections to the existing four-lane segments of Route 3.

The Preferred Alternative was selected for the following reasons. It utilizes an existing opening below the MacArthur Bridge approach and avoids existing Poplar Street Bridge piers. It avoids potential impacts on the proposed Jefferson National Expansion Memorial Park and existing Martin Luther King Bridge piers. It avoids an at-grade crossing with the "Q" Railroad Corridor, provides an interchange with the proposed new Mississippi River Bridge, and avoids impacts on Lovejoy Memorial Park. It also provides direct access to the Venice central business district.

The Preferred Alternative will be approximately 5.5 miles in length, will have 7 signalized intersections and 4 future controlled ramp intersections associated with the proposed new Mississippi River Bridge. In addition, the proposed alignment has 3 at-grade freight railroad crossing locations, 6 proposed and 3 existing grade separation structures, and 2 future structures associated with the proposed new Mississippi River Bridge. Approximately 160 acres of right-of-way will be required for this project.

The typical section was briefly discussed. Although the majority of the project will have a 44 ft open median with 24 ft pavement and 10 ft shoulders, there will be areas, such as at the Venice subway, that the cross section will be modified to an 18 ft curbed median with 24' pavement and curb and gutter.

Mr. Shimizu handed the presentation over to Mr. Doug Smith, the environmental lead for the project, to discuss the environmental impacts. Mr. Smith opened up the discussion by calling out the displacements, which are 22 occupied residences, 3 commercial buildings, 1 place of worship and 1 warehouse. All but the warehouse are located in Venice. The Corps of Engineers (Sue Horneman) asked about the percentage of population that will be displaced. Ron Shimizu mentioned the population was 3500, so the percentage is small.

In terms of Floodplain Compensation, compensatory floodplain storage sites of equal or greater volume to anticipated project losses are identified in the DEIS, it was determined that construction of the New Mississippi River Bridge would eliminate the need for several pumping stations that keep I-64 and I-55/70 from flooding. As a result, these pumping stations will be shut down. This will cause a rise in the groundwater within the project area. In turn, the rise in groundwater will result in 11 of the 13 detention basins designed for the project to no longer work. The USEPA (Mike MacMullen) stated that this rise in groundwater would definitely impact additional wetlands and the timing of the pump station shut-down and subsequent groundwater elevation rise is critical. It was stated that the pump station is located in an urban area of East St. Louis, and not where the wetlands are located.

The DEIS identifies direct impacts to 20 wetland sites by the preferred alignment for a total loss of 8.47 ha (21.11 ac). Seven of the detention basins shown in the DEIS are located in wetlands, resulting in 4.5 ha (11.28 ac) of wetland impacts. Once the new drainage plans are finalized, the wetland impacts will be recalculated. Potential changes were discussed, but the drainage modifications will not incur any significant additional wetland impacts which would affect the selection of the preferred alternate. The USEPA (Mike MacMullen) stated that as long as Parsons Brinkerhoff felt confident that there would be minimal impacts to the wetlands, he would agree with the continuation of the study.

A conceptual Wetland Compensation Plan has been prepared. Impact mitigation was to be provided offsite. The proposed wetland compensation site had a shortfall of 5.43 ha (13.35 ac) for the wetland impacts identified in the DEIS. However, should the revised drainage plan result in no additional wetland impacts, the current mitigation site will be adequate to compensate the 3.97 ha (9.83 ac) of impacts. The Illinois Department of Agriculture (Jim Hartwig) stated that they would like to be informed any time land is purchased for wetland mitigation. John Puricelli of IDOT stated that all the sites were within city limits and therefore the Department of Agriculture was not contacted. The Department of Agriculture stated that they would still like to be informed of any future purchases.

Regarding Threatened and Endangered Species, the US Fish and Wildlife Service issued a biological opinion on the project on September 7, 2000, which concluded the formal consultation process with a determination that the proposed action is not likely to jeopardize the continued existence of *Boltonia decurrens*. This species will be planted at all suitable wetland mitigation sites.

Mr. Smith handed the presentation back over to Mr. Shimizu. Throughout the preparation of this DEIS and preliminary alignment design, IDOT has coordinated their efforts with representatives of the communities, agencies, companies, and others that could be affected by the proposed project.

The DEIS public hearings were held on February 21, 2001 in East St. Louis and on February 22, 2001 in Venice. One hundred and fifteen (115) attended the hearing in East St. Louis and one hundred and fifty (150) attended the Venice hearing. Some comments that followed the hearings are following. There have been requests to provide additional local access other than Broadway Avenue in Venice. Property owners on the east side of Third Street in Venice would like to be bought out. There are concerns regarding access to particular properties in Venice. Residents and business

owners have expressed the desire for early buy-outs in Venice. Residents are concerned about the additional traffic the Broadway intersection will be redistributing on Second Street in Venice.

Once all the comments have been received by the April 2, 2001 deadline, Parsons Brinkerhoff will review and respond to any public comments made and those will be incorporated into the Final Environmental Impact Statement. The target date for the Record of Decision is July 30, 2001, with the project design approval anticipated on August 1, 2001.

The subject was opened up for questions at this point. The Corps of Engineers (Sue Horneman) raised the issue of population and wondered if the population loss was factored into the traffic. Parsons Brinkerhoff stated that the East West Gateway Coordinating Council (EWGCC) model was used and it does take into account the latest information possible. However, the 2000 census was not available to be added to the information.

FHWA (John Paul Kohler) asked if we then had concurrence on the final NEPA/404 Merger concurrence point. USEPA voiced their opinion that they do not foresee any problems, but would concur once they have reviewed the meeting minutes. Fish and Wildlife, Corps of Engineers, Illinois Department of Natural Resources, and the Illinois Department of Agriculture all voiced their concurrence.